

CERCOSPORA LEAF SPOT OF CLIMBING FIG

S. A. Alfieri, Jr.¹

Ficus pumila L., or the climbing fig as it is commonly known, is grown as a popular wall-adorning, evergreen ornamental in the southern areas of the United States. It is widely distributed in Asiatic countries from India to China and Japan (1,3). Climbing fig clings to walls (brick, rock, stone, mortar, etc.) via adventitious, aerial rootlets that develop freely at the nodes during its juvenile stage of growth, which can persist for many years (4,5). Foliar dimorphism is characteristic of this plant wherein the mature or fruiting stage of growth is characterized by much thicker and larger leaves which are more prominently petioled than those associated with juvenile growth (5). The fruit (figs) of this plant are said to be used for culinary and medicinal purposes in the Orient (5) but are otherwise not considered edible in the Western Hemisphere. The vine is vigorous in growth, can reach a height of 50 ft or more on wall surfaces, and is able to withstand salt spray in seacoast plantings (4).

SYMPTOMS. Of the relatively few diseases known to affect Ficus pumila, Cercospora fici Heald & Wolf (2) causes a leaf spot disease which generally occurs at a low incidence. The lesions are light brown and irregularly shaped with a dark brown margin and a yellow halo. They occur commonly along the leaf margins and tips of older leaves (Fig. 1), among both the juvenile and mature leaf forms.

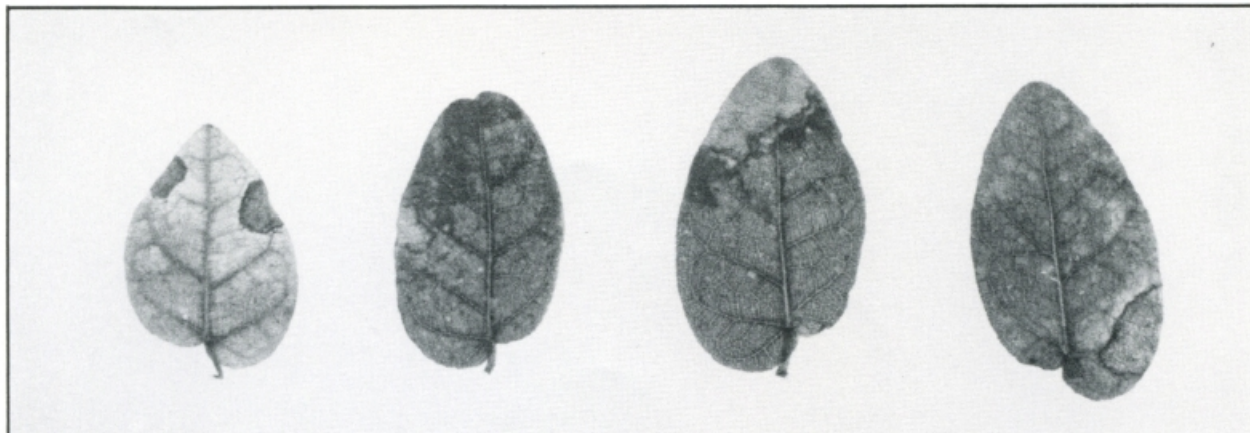


Fig. 1. Cercospora leaf spot of climbing fig.
(DPI Photo #702433-3)

¹Plant Pathologist, Division of Plant Industry, P. O. Box 1269, Gainesville, FL 32602.

CONTROL. Because this leaf spot usually occurs at very low levels, disease control measures appear unwarranted.

SURVEY AND DETECTION. The appearance of light brown, irregularly shaped leaf spotting having a dark brown margin and a yellow halo on older, mature leaves is symptomatic of this disease.

LITERATURE CITED.

1. BAILEY, L. H. 1971. Manual of cultivated plants. The Macmillan Co. New York, N.Y. 1116 pp.
2. CHUPP, C. 1953. A monograph of the genus *Cercospora*. Ithaca, N.Y. 667 PP-
3. CONDIT, I. J. 1953. *Ficus*; The exotic species. Univ. of Calif. Div. Agric. Sci., Riverside, Calif. 363 pp.
4. DICKEY, R. D., E. WEST, and H. MOWRY. 1963. Ornamental vines for Florida. Univ. Fla. Agric. Ext. Serv. Bull. 172A. 72 pp.
5. HILL, D. S. 1967. Figs (*Ficus* spp.) of Hong Kong. Hong Kong Univ. Press. 130 pp.

Contribution No. 582, Bureau of Plant Pathology.